

Executive Summary
Joint Rapid Needs Assessment Mission
Tigray South

A **Joint GoE and Humanitarian Partners Rapid Need Assessment** was conducted in South Tigray between 20 to 28 December 2020. The assessment team visited Alamata, Mehoni, Mekelle, and Enderta. The mission sought to better understand the critical humanitarian needs and gaps on the ground, identify protection risks to inform appropriate protection response, and understand the coordination mechanisms and the ongoing response in visited areas. The team conducted interviews with key informants (KI) using the MIRA questionnaire, observations and focused group discussions with community leaders.

Regarding **displacements and needs**, all people in the areas that faced active fighting were displaced for a period between two to three weeks. Some have started returning, and others still remain in the displacement locations. IDPs have so far received limited humanitarian assistance. Only few partners are currently providing assistance to the IDPs. Critical priorities for the IDPs and affected communities include food, Shelter/NFI, Security, and Health. Most of the people visited got their livelihoods disrupted and have lost their livestock, food, cash, and other valuable items due to looting or destruction. Some had their houses partially or entirely damaged or looted. Also, according to the regional authorities in Mekelle, about **4.5** million people currently require some sort of humanitarian assistance. This figure includes people who have been affected by the current conflict and those affected by natural hazards. In Alamata and nearby areas only, about **792,500** require urgent food assistance. Additionally, the regional authorities estimate at least **90,000** people have been displaced as result of the conflict, of whom **7,554** people are living in collective sites including schools.

All banks remain closed except in Alamata and lack of cash remains a huge concern. As a result of the banks' shutdown, people cannot exchange the old Birr for the new notes and purchase some of the few available goods in the market.

Regarding **food and livelihood**, locally produced commodities seem to be relatively available in the market. All imported items are rarely available. Besides the availability of commodities, affordability is a challenge for most households. People's purchasing power has diminished due to loss of income, non-payment of salary, and absence of cash. All the food stocks that people left in their homes were looted or destroyed. Collected harvest was allegedly either destroyed or burned by parties to the conflict; what remains in the farms is inaccessible due to fear of landmines.

The **Health and nutritional** sectors are severely affected. Most of the health facilities are not functioning, mostly those outside of the major towns. The ones located in the major towns are partially working. Some health workers lost their lives, some got injured, and others went back to their home villages and towns. The region has run entirely out of medical and nutrition supplies. Some of these supplies were looted or destroyed, including medical equipment. The parties to the conflict took many ambulances, and due to the curfew, ambulances are not allowed to function beyond 19:00 hrs. Currently, the health centers have no stock to provide help to the malnourished children; F75 and F100 are not available for SAM management.

Regarding **WASH**, there is a significant reduction in water supply in all the visited communities and institutions. Water schemes lack water treatment chemicals; some irrigation schemes have been destroyed. People are having difficulties in accessing water, some are fetching water from unprotected springs, and others walk a long distance to the water source. Also, vendors are selling water at a higher price. Shortage and the increased fuel price are also affecting the availability of drinking water. KIs reported poor hygiene conditions, especially the poor drainage and congestion of people in IDPs sites. Also, there is a lack of hygiene promotion activities.

In terms of **Shelter/NFI**, affected communities and IDPs lost all their households' items, and some had their houses partially or entirely burned or damaged. According to the IDPs, Shelter/NFI remains the most critical need next to food, security, and dignity. IDPs remain susceptible to communicable diseases including COVID-19. Schools are not functional. Some were looted or sustained some damage, and teachers abandoned their workplaces due to insecurity and non-payment of salaries. The conflict has had a direct psychological impact on the people. The psychological impact has been augmented by the sense of insecurity, the effect of landmines, the allegation of arrest and detention of youth, and reports of SGBV. People also reported looting and destruction of properties by parties to the conflict.

Some of the team's key **Recommendations** include an immediate deployment of the assessment team for extended periods to carry out both rapid and in-depth sectoral assessment in the areas not reached. There is need for a quick scale-up of humanitarian response including blanket distribution of food, Shelter/NFI, provision of fuel for the health facilities and water points, cash assistance, protection, provision of critical medical and nutrition supplies, and rehabilitation of health and school facilities. There is also, need to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to the hard to reach areas and the scaling-up of humanitarian presence to support humanitarian response and coordination in the Tigray region. There is an urgent need to deploy strong teams into Mekelle to work with the regional government to coordinate and facilitate humanitarian response.